

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 18th 2015

Committee Members Present: Larry Thomas, John Chlebek, Patrick Mosesso, Cal Calnan

Absent: Tracey Vasile, Thom Freeman, Javed Hussain, Monica Fisler, Kristin Papianou, Larry Stern, Susan Dring, Heidi Krockta

Others Present: Bill Keagan, Randy Scollins, Sharon Wason, Lorraine Brue, Ginny Coppola, Mary Beth, Jane Pierce, Judy Johnson

Notes taken by: Maham Zia

The meeting was brought to order at 7:10 by Larry T, Vice Chairman.

7:00 PM Budget Review Planning- Sharon Wason—

Sharon explained that everything is level funded except for spring water. Everyone uses planning board spring water but Town Hall would cover that now. She also anticipates most of engineering money will be spent. Larry asked if money for master plan is spent and Sharon said they are on fast track to finish master plan and that there are hearings for four warrant articles.

There are four Planning Board Articles. One of them is about the OSDR changes. There have been changes in state law about conservation subdivision but there is not much opposition. There are two articles to accept two roads: Mc Namara Way and Michelmore Way with upcoming hearings. The third road that came up is Garrett Spilane but it needs to be inspected. Chris Gallagher inspects it but with snow the inspection can't be done in time.

7:25 PM Budget Review Conservation- Manager Jane Pierce—

Larry T began asking about any high points in the budget. Jane said that the budget is level funded except increase in hours to full time for manager, herself. Larry T asked for more details about the increased hours and Jane supplied that she began at 19 hours and is currently at 27.5 hours. With this budget, she is aiming for full time hours. Larry T asked if the position is currently benefitted and Jane responded that the position is benefitted and the increase in hours reflects all the things that need to be done that Jane is not able to fit into her current time slot. Judy Johnson from the Conservation Commission also spoke on Jane's behalf and gave several examples of the tasks that need to be done in Jane's position and how they

are increasing due to more recent acts or more complex filing systems. Judy ended with saying that Jane has provided a list of goals that she will do with the increased hours.

Larry T asked if Jane goes back and checks on the wetlands if other groups are delineating wetlands when they are developing. Judy responded that they have to do that and it is the starting point of their jurisdiction. Jane added that recent polls support development of trails. Jane would like to get a formal stewardship program going to maintain those trails. She further added that nonprofit land trusts are required to make a report and she can see that happening in Foxboro as well.

Patrick asked about the rental properties. Jane explained that the commission followed state model where people lived in the rental property and maintained it but those people were not able to keep the property up. Judy added that they are trying to make that into a recreation area. Larry T asked if Mill St is under the commission. Judy said it is not. Returning to rental properties, Judy spoke about the benefits of keeping one of the houses well maintained because it has value and the tenant has restored it well. She said that they aimed to maintain the house until the commission can access some conservation land.

Larry T asked where the rent from Spring St was going and how much was in the revolving fund currently. Jane responded that the rental went into two different funds, one of them being the revolving which contained roughly \$4-5,000. Larry T further asked if Jane could spend that to which Jane replied that she could spend to an extent.

John asked for an explanation of beaver management and whether Animal Control played a part in it. Jane explained that there is a potential that beavers could appear in Foxboro and build dams which could cause flooding. She added that not Animal Control but the Board of Health played a role in beaver management if the beavers flooded areas that containing sewage. Judy ended on the importance of beavers for the habitat but also the importance of keeping them away from sewage and septic using different methods.

7:50 Budget Review General Government- Town Manager Bill Keagan & Finance Director Randy Scollins—

Larry T, as the liaison, began with the two big changes: building maintenance is a new department and HR department is being moved into administration and there is a request for iPads.

Randy said that the budget stands at \$225,000 and ultimately this will become a balanced budget with the moving parts. Health premiums are one of the moving pieces and will need to be watched. Snow and Ice is moving away. We are five grand over but we might be able to cover it. Last thing is some of the requests that are under discretion of town manager. There are nine budgets that we haven't gone over yet.

Larry T asked how the state government deficit affects us. Bill K said that it's too early to tell. The governor has a preliminary plan for this year and Bill K thinks that we will be back to 0. He said snow is one of the biggest concerns but he hasn't seen the actual governor's budget yet. Charlie Baker made a strong commitment towards local government we can identify our issues to them directly. We need attention on local regulations that are costing us money. Randy added that the governor's proposal is usually a good one because legislation takes care and reviews it.

John asked about the OPEB Trust on the summary page. Randy said that that number is often taken care of by the Operating Budget.

John asked if local receipts are not what we expect does an apportionment occur. Randy explained that we estimate local receipts and then we don't commit to spend it all. We have been targeting to underspend local receipts so we can recharge our free cash. We try to generate 2 million a year to recharge. It's a reserve, a hedge. Then we use that in the next year to apportion capital and operating budget. We have a built in a cushion in our budget process. We have to fit in the town hall and the debt service in operating budget. This has been a multi-year process. Larry T added that it's usual that another town is a million short and we don't have that issue because of the way we are managed. Randy said that it's a multi decade success story.

John asked if Foxboro Terminals will be an abatement. Randy said that that is the underbelly of prop 2.5: they will be entitled to file an abatement because of what happened and that is not unusual. This is what overlay is used for. The good news is that the chief assessor has done a great job taking care of the abatement cases she inherited.

Larry T asked about the iPads for the Selectmen request. Bill K said that this discussion started 6 years ago. The idea is that all the packets are put on the iPad so that the meetings can be paperless. There is software available now that could record dictation to take care of note taking. Eventually, this could be done for all committees. Larry T said that Steve Udden has been on committees that use iPads and that the meetings went a lot better. Mary Beth echoed this, using the example of meetings she has attended. She said that going electronic helped with printing costs as well. Following this, there was a short discussion on whether tablets were on their way out and small laptops would be a better option. Patrick asked about remote voting options and Ginny opined that she was not for it but it could help voter participation.

Randy overviewed the municipal building budget, which includes maintenance and utilities. He said everything has been rolled into Department 192 except for the Public Safety Building since Chief Hatfield has maintained the building so well. The repair and maintenance has also been pooled and one additional worker needs to be hired to manage the square footage (\$75,000). Because everything has been wrapped into one centralized department, the number has gone up from \$114,000 to \$603,000. On a final note, Bill K added that the centralization should yield good changes.

8:00 PM Budget Review Debit Service- Finance Director Randy—

Randy started with the good news: there is a decrease in debt schedule and interest is going down. There might be an increase if Town Hall gets approved but that would be funded in a way that fits in the operating budget to avoid burdening the tax payer.

Larry T asked what the next big project is. Randy responded that there is nothing big for a while save highway equipment and fire engines. Town Hall is next thing and then the Burrell. Randy also said that he doesn't anticipate the debt burden being as high as a year or two ago.

8:42 PM Budget Review Pension and Insurance—Bill Keagan and Randy Scollins—

Randy said that he is not anticipating change. There was a discussion between Larry T and Bill K on why pension is done by Norfolk County since it could be possible that the cost could be less if managed differently.

Randy covered workman's compensation next, stating that we are in a comfortable place. He said that there are regular loss control meetings and programs that generates rewards. Bill K added that \$40,000 were generated in savings and things are working well.

Randy said that we are self funded on unemployment. This year unemployment may be higher, which is unique. He said that it's level funded and extras become free cash. Randy also covered health insurance. He said it was built that from bottom up and everyone's insurance is tracked. The premiums are adjusted as people move in or out. Bill K added that the rates are going up this year since we live in the most expensive place in the world for health care. On the bright side, this made employees educated consumers about their services. Bill K said that health care was also part of the State Budget problem and that although Foxboro has a more competitive plan, and changes need to be watched out for. Bill K, in the end, stated that pension and health insurance were the main cost drivers that needed to be watched for. Larry T asked if we would be able to get Arc to which Bill K said that it is unlikely.

Bill K also said that meals tax should be a growing source of revenue since new establishments are coming in. Patrick asked what is doubled consulting. Randy clarified that actuarial studies are requirements now.

9:00 Adjourn

Patrick motioned to adjourn and John seconded.

Vote: 3/0/0

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: March 4, 2015

Vote: 6-0-4

Tracey Vasile
Advisory Committee Chairman